Ukraine in talks with Germany, Romania and Turkey over gas imports

Ukraine has started talks with Germany, Romania and Turkey to buy 2-3.5 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually from each country in a bid to reduce imports of more expensive Russian gas, Kommersant-Ukraine reported on Monday, citing sources in the Energy Ministry, Ria Novosti reports.Naftogaz, the Ukrainian national energy company intends to purchase about 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas in Europe or about one third of gas supplies to the ex-Soviet republic, its head Yevheniy Bakulin said on March 17. He mentioned the price of natural gas in Europe was about USD 30-40 per 1,000 cubic meters lower than the price fixed in the 2009 contract with Russian energy giant Gazprom.Russia and Ukraine have been embroiled in a drawn-out dispute over the price and volume of Russian gas purchased by Ukraine. Kiev insists the current price is too high, while Moscow is pushing for control of Ukraine's gas transit system to Europe, as part of a deal to cut prices. Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych has said that Ukraine annually pays about USD 3.8 bln more for Russian natural gas supplies than the price paid by European countries or about 8 percent of Ukraine's total budget spending in 2012. Yanukovych said USD 250 per 1,000 cu m was a fair price for Russian natural gas supplies compared with over USD 400 per 1,000 cu m paid by Ukraine in the fourth quarter of 2012.